

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A system for detecting tissue contact and penetration depth comprising:

a needle with a first opening and a second opening, said needle having a lumen extending ~~therethrough between the first opening and the second opening~~ and at least one aperture in the needle to the lumen located a predetermined distance from said first opening;

a fluid pressure measurement assembly coupled with a portion of said needle to measure pressure of a fluid dispensed in said needle, said pressure measurement assembly configured to measure a first pressure that is the pressure of said fluid as said fluid is dispensed through said needle at a constant rate, a second pressure that is a pressure change when said needle contacts said tissue and said first opening becomes occluded, and a third pressure that is a second pressure change when said needle penetrates said tissue and said aperture becomes occluded.

2. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said pressure measurement assembly comprises:

a fluid pressure sensor.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said pressure of fluid includes a pressure of a therapeutic agent to be injected into said tissue.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said aperture has an area in said range between about 0.003 and 10 mm².

6. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said predetermined distance is a desired penetration depth of said needle into said tissue.

7. (Original) The system of claim 5 wherein said predetermined distance from said first end is about 0.5 to 10 millimeters.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said first end of said needle has at least one of a tapered and untapered portion.
9. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said needle has an outer diameter in said range between about 0.008 and 0.26 inches.
10. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said needle has an inner diameter in said range between about 0.004 and 0.22 inches.
11. (Original) The system of claim 1 further comprises a computer processor coupling to said fluid pressure measurement assembly, said computer processor configured to perform at least one of determining and distinguishing said rate of changes in said static pressure to determine and distinguish said various penetration depths of said needle.
12. (Original) The system of claim 11 wherein said computer processor further couples to at least one of a visual feedback system indicator and an audible feedback system to issue human-recognizable signals as to penetration depths of said needle.

Claims 13-20 (Canceled)